

daughters, twins Nicole and Rebecca, work in the field of Native American advocacy, health, and education. Steve and his wife, Susan, love their children and their numerous grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Steve for all of his contributions. Because of his work, generations to come will learn about the culture and contributions of the indigenous people.

#### REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE JOHN CONYERS, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening, I joined Ambassador Etienne at the French Embassy to acknowledge the DC JazzFest. But I also was there, more importantly, to pay tribute to the Honorable John Conyers.

Yesterday, I took a minute on the floor to indicate that I would be speaking about him over a period of days and weeks because his 53 years as a mentor and beloved colleague deserve that tribute. But yesterday, I was probably at a place John Conyers enjoyed the most. Many people may not know that he was a jazz enthusiast and maybe prepared to become a jazz musician in his early years as a young, young man. His father, a strong union organizer, a UAW worker, thought that might not be the best approach for his young son, I believe the oldest of their four children.

John, being a dutiful son, went on to Wayne State and graduated from its law school as well. That was our gift to the American people.

I want to take a moment to be able to highlight the very undercore, if you will, the underpinnings of the leadership of John Conyers, a progressive before the term could even be defined.

I don't believe that he looked at himself in that way, but I think he looked at himself as one who would break through doors that others could not.

Of course, he was one of the original cofounders of the Congressional Black Caucus. But he rose to be chairman of two committees, the Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Committee on the Judiciary, and he became the dean of this House, this entire House of Representatives.

I don't think that would be what his own desire of tribute would be. I use the terminology that he not only spoke for the voiceless, but he spoke for persons who were actually silenced. That means that they tried to speak, but they were silenced. They were rejected. They were pushed back. They had not the power to be heard.

How amazing it is to have found someone of the African American heritage and tradition who had gone through life in a segregated America to be able to speak for voices that were varied and different, who needed to hear that someone cared about them, from Native Americans to Latinos, to

the disabled, to those in the LGBTQ community and beyond.

He was a champion of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He got into Congress in 1964. He understood the value of giving people, no matter who you were, the right to vote. I will talk about that more extensively in the days to come, but I remember when we sat and reauthorized that legislation with a Republican President, what a wonderful experience of coming together around voting as we wrote legislation that George W. Bush signed enthusiastically, with an overwhelming vote in the House and an overwhelming vote in the Senate.

We even honored many different people from around the Nation, including naming it after the Honorable Barbara Jordan and many others in that timeframe to reinforce the value of voting. John did that in a bipartisan manner, a lesson that we can learn even today. He never compromised his principles, but he stood for the idea of bipartisanship for justice.

He was here for the Legal Services Corporation Act. Can you imagine that if you were poor 50 years ago, you wouldn't have any representation, not in the criminal system or sense, but in the civil system—being evicted, having problems with healthcare and dealing with your health insurance, or having a matter that required legal representation so that you could have justice. The Legal Services Corporation was something very near and dear to John Conyers.

Let me move quickly to talk about his work dealing with the PATRIOT Act after 9/11. Yes, we wanted to be protecting ourselves against terrorists, but John Conyers was a voice that said that civil liberties of the American people are crucial, and we will not trample in this committee, the Committee on the Judiciary, on their rights of privacy and their rights of liberty. He believed in that.

Let me also say that in the bankruptcy bill, when so many people were pushing to get a bill done that would leave out women and children, divorcees, leave out the poor who also needed to have some way of organizing their debt, in fact, he was a champion for that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a champion for the reparations bill that most people don't understand, an idea they would understand later, he was our champion. He spoke for those who were silenced.

#### CELEBRATING LIBERTY DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, this week, the Virgin Islands celebrates Liberty Day and honors David Hamilton Jackson and his relentless pursuit of free press for the people of the Virgin Islands.

From the 1700s until the 1950s, the Virgin Islands was owned by Denmark,

which maintained censorship over the press. D. Hamilton Jackson knew that in order for a people to truly have freedom, the press must also be free.

Traveling to Denmark to advocate on behalf of the workers of the Virgin Islands, he took it upon himself to also fight for the emancipation of the press. His passionate advocacy was fruitful, and upon his return to the territory, he published the first newspaper in the Virgin Islands not controlled by the government.

This act empowered the people of the Virgin Islands and opened the door for generations of Virgin Islanders to allow their voices to be heard in the formal medium of press.

D. Hamilton Jackson challenged the status quo and the prevailing laws of his time to secure a future for the islands he loved.

D. Hamilton Jackson used his newfound right for the free press to create The Herald. As editor, he used that publication to uncover corruption and educate the working class. Frustrated with neglect from the Danish Government, Jackson used The Herald to build support for the transfer of the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States.

The American flag that flies over the Virgin Islands today is a fruit of the seed that D. Hamilton Jackson sowed on his quest for liberty and greater opportunity for Virgin Islanders.

□ 1030

The Virgin Islands continue to embody the spirit of D. Hamilton Jackson and his work.

Rena Brodhurst has spent her life walking the path of Jackson as a champion of Virgin Islands Free Press as the owner and editor of the St. Croix Avis. Educated on St. Croix and then attending college, she followed her family's tradition of fighting to defend a free press.

Her father, Mr. Brodhurst, was once convicted of contempt of court after publishing an unsigned letter critical of a court decision and social conditions of his time. However, the right to free press prevailed with the U.S. Third Circuit making clear that the constitutional right to freedom of speech in the press was not one that would be infringed upon in the United States.

Rena, herself, has sued the government to protect the right to publish freely without retribution. A strong woman, mother, and friend, she acts as a true Virgin Islands queen, unbroken and a fierce defender of free press.

Today, a new generation steps up to carry the torch of D. Hamilton Jackson. State of the Territory founder Amaziah George, a Marine Corps veteran, brings Virgin Islands press to the world through his online social media paper.

His passion for making the voice and concerns of millennial Virgin Islanders heard make him a trailblazer of his generation. With his willingness to speak truth, the secret stories that